

A HUNDRED BIRD TRIBES PERISHING TO BEDECK MILADI'S HAT



Dr. William T. Hornaday

Director of New York Zoological Park



Two Game Birds of Kansas City Who Have Shot Ducks According to Law!

The Last Living Passenger Pigeon, 2 Years Old



Some Victims of the Feather Trade

ILLUSTRATION FROM N. Y. ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

If the National Senate Approves, as the House Has Done, the Measure Written by Dr. W. T. Hornaday, an Effective Blow Will Have Been Struck in Defence of the Fast Vanishing Wild Birds of the World.

DR. WILLIAM T. HORNADAY, director of the New York Zoological Park, appeared in Washington a few days ago before the Senate committee to ask the Congress of the United States to stop the activities of the American people in the extermination of birds for millinery purposes.

On the day of his return to this city he told the writer that fully one hundred species of the most beautiful and curious birds of the world are now being exterminated to meet the demands for plumes, feathers and skins to use on women's hats.

He called attention to such salient facts as these:

The number of wild birds annually consumed by the feather trade is so enormous as to challenge the imagination.

The whole world is under tribute.

No species is spared for sentimental reasons.

And the most beautiful and most curious species are the ones in the greatest danger.

For instance, the exquisite birds of paradise are being exterminated literally before our eyes, and the extermination of a species is a crime. The greater and lesser birds of paradise and the Jobi bird of paradise are now nearly extinct.

The beautiful quetzal of Guatemala cannot be obtained alive at any price.

The scarlet ibis, roseate spoonbill, Carolina parakeet and flamingo are now forever gone from the bird fauna of the United States—thanks, says Dr. Hornaday, to the feather hunters.

Our own white egrets are so nearly extinct that it is about time to count them out. The great avian wonder of the Andes, the condor, is, as Carl Hagenbeck has said, rapidly being exterminated for its quill feathers—demanded by the London market.

A RECORD OF LONDON SALES.

Last year an agent of the New York Zoological Society purchased at one of the London feather sales 1,600 well made skins of humming birds at two cents each.

At the London sales of February, May and October, 1911, the feathers of the following birds were sold: 129,168 egrets, 12,388 herons, 20,698 birds of paradise, 41,099 humming birds, 9,864 eagles and condors and 9,742 other birds. The grand total of 22,490 choice birds.

The records prove it to be an inconceivable fact that no species of bird or mammal can long withstand exploitation for commercial purposes. And, according to Dr. Hornaday, the records also show that civilized man is pulverizing and destroying all the resources of nature that can be made to yield money profit.

The terrific drain upon bird life is not generally appreciated. During the last forty years a repulsive and horridly thoroughgoing slaughter has proceeded furiously throughout every part of the civilized world. But during the last five years, Dr. Hornaday says, this slaughter has assumed most alarming proportions.

"Beyond question," said Dr. Hornaday, "we are exterminating our finest species of mammals, birds and fishes according to law; I am appalled by the mass of evidence proving that throughout the entire United States and Canada, in every state and province, the existing legal system for the preservation of wild life is fatally defective.

The bird lovers of England, led by the nobility and even royalty itself, have been fighting for about that length of time to close the appalling feather market of London.

The records of the quarterly feather sales in London show that all the unprotected regions of the earth are being raked and combed for skins, plumes, quills, heads and crests of wild birds.

Indians of Brazil and Venezuela, the naked Papuans of New Guinea and the Malays of the Malay Archipelago generally, the blacks of Central Africa, the fur-clad Siberians and the savages of Nepal and Burma and Tibet, all are killing birds for the adornment of headdress and women.

It is a fact that the albatross of fashion

involves the killing of the parent birds at the very season when the young are in the nest, and the helpless nestlings starve to death. The albatross has been well named "the white badge of cruelty."

Within the last three weeks T. Gilbert Pearson, secretary of the National Association of Audubon Societies, has seen in Florida a recently annihilated albatross rookery, with twenty-eight dead birds on the ground, stripped of their plumes, and young birds in the nests above. In Florida the national association is today in a hand-to-hand fight with the plume hunting desperadoes of that state for the existence of about twenty small colonies, which represent the remnant of that species in our country.

THE TARIFF MEASURE.

At the end of Section 37 of the new tariff bill a clause, written by Dr. Hornaday, as follows, has been added:

"PROVIDED, that the importation of albatrosses, egret plumes or 'osprey' plumes, and the feathers, quills, heads, wings, tails, skins or parts of skins of wild birds, either raw or manufactured, and not for scientific or educational purposes, is hereby prohibited; but this provision shall not apply to the feathers or plumes of ostriches, or to the feathers of domestic fowls of any kind."

This measure has passed the House. If adequately supported in the Senate it will become a law.

An amendment has been proposed by Senator Clapp, which, if adopted, would not prohibit the importation of "feathers or plumes of game birds usually killed for food purposes and birds which are killed as pests."

Dr. Hornaday asserts that from the first the milliners have contended that they should be permitted to import and use the feathers of birds that are regarded as "pests." But he says this contention, if granted, would open the door to the use of the plumage of all the eagles, hawks and owls of the world, and many of the songbirds also.

Here in the United States, where we have a great many species of hawks and owls, the Department of Agriculture has demonstrated, after a long series of investigations, that only four species ever are worthy of destruction because of their predatory habits. These are the cooper's hawk, duck hawk, sharp-shinned hawk and pigeon hawk. And Dr. Hornaday points out it would take a mighty good hunter to find a living specimen of any one of them to-day.

ON LAYSAN ISLAND.

As an American instance of bird slaughter for the feather trade consider the bird tragedy on Laysan Island. In the Pacific Ocean, 700 miles northwest of Honolulu, and one of the United States.

In 1909 one Max Schlemmer, according to Dr. Hornaday, undertook to destroy the half million wild birds inhabiting that small islet. After about 300,000 albatrosses, gulls, terns and shearwaters had been savagely destroyed by a band of Japanese laborers the United States government sent the revenue cutter Thetis to the spot, and its officers arrested everybody on Laysan and stopped the slaughter. To-day the remnants of those bird flocks are protected.

"Australia has already done what we propose shall be done by America," said Dr. Hornaday. "Think what it would mean to end, for the whole United States, by only six lines of national law, the disgraceful bird slaughter that now is going on in response to the demands of the traders in American fashions."

"Great effort, however, will be necessary to prevent an amendment being placed on the tariff bill clause either by the committee or on the floor of the Senate."

"Ingenious arguments and appeals are being made by the trade in such a way as to command the interest. If not the support, of Senators. A good illustration is the letter of A. L. Hamilton,

which appeared in 'The New York Times' of May 5."

In the paragraph next to the last Mr. Hamilton said, in support of the amendment covering game birds and birds of prey:

"Paradise birds come from the island of New Guinea, the government of which amply protects the birds, forbidding their taking or shipment during half the year—the breeding season; so important a source of revenue are they, both in their sale and export duty, that they are carefully conserved and in no danger of extinction."

"The New York Zoological Society," commented Dr. Hornaday, "cannot conceive of any basis for such a statement, except in the imagination of the writer. So far as we have been able to learn, there is no law protecting these birds, either in Dutch New Guinea or in German New Guinea."

"In Papua (British New Guinea) Ordinance No. 15, of 1908, absolutely prohibits the sale or export of birds of paradise, gaur pigeons or ospreys, except on written consent of the Collector of Customs. This ordinance has not been repealed, but it has since been strengthened by including the plumage of the lesser heron.

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In 1885 Massachusetts gravely passed a law protecting the netters of wild pigeons from foreign interference. There was a fine of \$10 for damaging nets or frightening pigeons away from them. This was on the theory that the pigeons were so abundant they could not by any possibility ever become scarce and that pigeon slaughter was a legitimate industry.

The passenger pigeon millions were destroyed so quickly, and so thoroughly in mass, that the American people utterly failed to comprehend it, and for thirty years obstinately refused to believe that the species had been suddenly wiped off the map of North America. There was talk about the great flocks having "taken refuge in South America or in Mexico," and being still in existence. There were surmises about their having all "gone out to sea" and perished on the briny deep.

A thousand times, at least, wild pigeons have been "reported" as having been "seen." These rumors have covered nearly every Northern state, the whole Southwest and California. For years and years naturalists have been patiently writing letters to explain and over that the band-tailed pigeon of the Pacific Coast and the Southwest are neither of them the passenger pigeon, and never can be.

There was a long period when naturalists believed many of the pigeon reports that came from the states where the birds once were most numerous; but that period has absolutely passed.

During the last five years large cash rewards, aggregating about \$5,000, have been offered for the discovery of one nesting pair of genuine passenger pigeons. Many persons have claimed this reward

and has been supplemented by a customs order of Australia prohibiting the importation of plumage into that country.

"Now, where is the basis for the statement quoted? A similar statement was made in Washington on May 21 by Mr. Benjamin Feiler in behalf of the feather trade in a public hearing before the Finance Committee of the Senate, and at that time I challenged its accuracy, but had no opportunity to correct it then."

NEW YORK CONSCIENCE-FREE.

New York is almost a Spottless Town in plume-free millinery, and London and Paris are the worst places in the world. As yet Mayor Gaynor has not claimed credit for this condition.

Here in New York no man may sell, own for sale or offer for sale the plumage of any wild American bird other than a gamebird. More than that, the plumage of any foreign bird belonging to any bird family represented in the fauna of North America cannot be sold here.

There are only a few kinds of improper "millinery" feathers that it is possible to sell here under the law. It is true that a few servant girls are now wearing the cast-off albatrosses of their mistresses, but they are only as one in a thousand. At Atlantic City there is said to be a fine bird display of servant girl and lady's maid albatrosses. In New York and New Jersey, in Pennsylvania (for everything except the sale of heron and egret plumes, a privilege obtained by a bunco game), in Massachusetts and in many other of our states the wild-birds-plumage millinery business is dead.

When one is calling the roll of the dead species of American birds, the disgraceful extermination of the passenger pigeon points a lesson that should be heeded.

The range of the passenger pigeon covered nearly the whole United States from the Atlantic coast westward to the Rocky Mountains. A few bold pigeons crossed the Rocky Mountains into Oregon, Northern California and Washington, but only

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